

## Message Text

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ACTION OC-05

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R 071030Z APR 75  
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1134  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

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EO 11652N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ACOM, UR, US  
SUBJ: LENINGRAD AIRPORT EXCHANGE OF CLASSIFIED POUCHES

REFS: LENINGRAD 0018, LENINGRAD 0136, STATE 023183,  
MOSCOW 03015

FRANKFURT FOR FRDCO

1. SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: LENINGRAD GETS LESS  
THAN HALF A LOAF ON TRANSPORT OF POUCHES. ACTION REQUESTED:  
REPORT FROM DEPT ON AIRLINE HANDLING OF SOV DIP COURIERS,  
PARTICULARLY IN SAN FRANCISCO. END SUMMARY.

2. CONSUL GENERAL AND DPO AGAIN RAISED SUBJECT OF AIRPORT  
EXCHANGES OF POUCHES WITH DIPLOMATIC AGENCY DURING CALL  
APRIL 1 (OTHER SUBJECTS COVERED SEPTELS). DIP AGENCY CHIEF  
REPEATED EARLIER ASSURANCES THAT SOVS WISHED BE AS FORTHCOMING  
AS POSSIBLE IN MEETING OUR REQUESTS, AND THEREUPON CALLED  
IN AEROFLOT DEPUTY MANAGER FOR INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS IN  
LENINGRAD. FOLLOWING DISCUSSION OUR REQUIREMENTS,  
WE WERE PROMISED A "DEDICATED" BAGGAGE CART TO TAKE  
POUCHES TO AND FROM PLANESIDE.

3. ON ARRIVAL AT AIRPORT APRIL 3, AEROFLOT SERVICE  
REP INFORMED CONGEN PERSONNEL THAT "ORDERS HAD BEEN  
RECEIVED THAT ALL DIPLOMATIC MAIL MUST BE WEIGHED  
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AND ANY WEIGHT ABOVE BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE OF COURIERS

ABOARD PLANE FROM HELSINKI MUST BE PAID FOR-CASH-ON THE SPOT." CONSOFFS NOTED THAT THIS WAS FIRST TIME WE HAD HEARD OF NEW PROCEDURE. WHILE WE HAVE NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE TO WEIGHING BAGS AS AIRLINE SHOULD KNOW HOW MUCH WEIGHT IS GOING ABOARD AIRCRAFT, WE DO RATHER OBJECT TO HAVING NEW PROCEDURE SPRUNG ON US WITH ZERO PRIOR NOTICE. (COMMENT: POUCHES HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN LOADED WITHOUT WEIGHING HERE AND CARRIER, FINNAIR, HAS COLLECTED FOR OVERWEIGHT AT HELSINKI). CONSOFF CONFIRMED IN SUBSEQUENT PLANESIDE CHAT WITH FINNAIR STATION MANAGER THAT NEW REQUIREMENT DID NOT ORIGINATE WITH FINNAIR AND WAS AS MUCH NEWS TO HIM AS TO US. HE HAD ALWAYS ESTIMATED WEIGHT OF BAGS AND SO ENTERED THEM ON MANIFEST. FINNAIR WAS PERFECTLY HAPPY WITH OLD PROCEDURE.

4. BAGS WEIGHED, IN THIS CASE WELL WITHIN BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE, CONGEN PERSONNEL PROCEEDED TO USUAL AREA TO AWAIT TRANSPORT TO AIRCRAFT ON ITS ARRIVAL. AND WHAT TO THEIR WONDERING EYES SHOULD APPEAR BUT A BAGGAGE CART, COMPLETE WITH DRIVER, AND ABOVE-MENTIONED DEPUTY MANAGER, AND HIS DEPUTY, AND TWO AEROFLOT SERVICE REPS. CONGEN PERSONNEL RAISED QUESTION OF WEIGHT CHARGES WITH THIS BRASS, ONLY TO MEET STONE WALL BASED ON "INTERNATIONAL AIR SAFETY REGULATIONS REQUIRE ALL BAGGAGE BAGGAGE BE WEIGHED AND RECORDED ON MANIFEST." FINNAIR STATION MANAGER POINTED OUT FINNAIR SATISFIED THAT WEIGHT OF POUCHES ON AIRCRAFT POSED NO SAFETY THREAT, "BUT (AEROFLOT) WOULD ABVIOUSLY DO WHAT IT WANTED TO."

5. WITH THE AIRCRAFT ON FINAL APPROACH, CONGEN PERSONNEL PREPARED TO ACCOMPANY POUCHES ON BAGGAGE CART, ONLY TO BE TOLD THAT NOT MORE THAN ONE PERSON OTHER THAN DRIVER COULD RIDE ON CART AS ONLY TWO SEATS ON VEHICLE: REMAINING PERSON COULD RIDE BUS. IN EVENT, REMAINING PERSON HOOED IT AS BUS PULLED AWAY WHILE HE ARGUING POINT.6. THE REMAINDER OF THE EXCHANGE WENT REASONABLY SMOOTHLY, WITH INCOMING POUCHES DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO CONGEN VEHICLE AT TERMINAL.

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7. COMMENT: LEAVING ASIDE FOR THE MOMENT THE PROBLEM OF PAYMENT FOR OVERWEIGHT (WHICH WE WILL PURSUE WITH FINNAIR AND AEROFLOT IN THE FIRST INSTANCE), THERE REMAINS THE PROBLEM OF TRANSPORT TO AND FROM THE AIRCRAFT. ONE ESCORT ABOARD CART AND OTHER ABOARD BUS IS RIDICULOUS AND, WHILE OPEN CART MAY BE MARGINALLY ACCEPTABLE IN PLEASANT WEATHER, USE IN

INCLEMENT WEATHER WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REQLT IN WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION CLAIMS FOR FROSTBITE AND/OR PARTIAL DROWNING. (FYI-WINTER WIND CHILL INDICES ON TARMAC KNOWN TO REACH MINUS 40 AND 50 FAHRENHEIT.) WE STILL BELIEVE, THEREFORE, CLOSED VEHICLE A MUST, AND CONTINUE TO HOPE DEPT/EMBASSY EFFORTS WILL GAIN FOR US PERMISSION USE CONGEN VEHICLE, OR AT LEAST A CLOSED AIRPORT VEHICLE.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE AT DEPARTMENT'S EARLIEST CONVENIENCE DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF AIRLINE HANDLING OF SOV DIP COURIERS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO SAN FRANCISCO PRACTICE. (WE RECALL MEMCON REPORTING SOVS BEING TAKEN TO AIRCRAFT IN AIRLINE CAR.)

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